



A Burial Service for

Three Unknown Soldiers of the Great War

10.00 hours 12 June 2025

CWGC Bedford House Cemetery, Belgium

**Service conducted by the Reverend John Storey CF
Chaplain to 5th Battalion, The Rifles**

REC529 – Two unknown soldiers

In the spring and summer of 2020, during archaeological work, human remains were recovered from agricultural land at Oude Bellewaerdestraat near Ypres.

The site is historically farmland, during the war it was known as Eitel Fritz Farm and the buildings were slightly to the north of where they are now – having been rebuilt following the end of the war.

The recovery was made from a location known to have been a communication trench between the German Front Line and the Support trenches. This part of Belgium was the scene of several phases of intense fighting during the war with main peaks of activity during 1915, 1917 and 1918.

In 1915 the area was fought over during the Second Battle of Ypres which lasted from 22 April to 25 May 1915. During this time the recovery location and the nearby town of Verlorenhoek were captured by the Germans.

On 31 July 1917 there was further fierce fighting in this area with the Allies eventually recapturing Verlorenhoek, including the area from where the remains were recovered.

The Battle of the Lys took place from 7 to 29 April 1918 and was part of the German Spring Offensive. During this period the recovery area fell back into German control and behind their front line until the end of September.

The Fifth Battle of Ypres took place at the end of September 1918 and following the first day of the battle (28 September) the recovery area came back under Allied control and remained behind their front lines for the remainder of the war.

Due to a lack of identifying artefacts found with the remains, it has not been possible to name the casualties, and so today we bury them as unknown soldiers.

REC552 – An unknown soldier

The third soldier was recovered from the same field as the first two, during another phase of development later in 2020. Unlike the first two men, there were some artefacts found alongside him which could have helped with his identification – unfortunately they presented a confusing picture, that it was impossible to unravel and as such he too remains unidentified at this time.

The Cemetery

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Bedford House Cemetery is situated in the grounds of Chateau Rosendal, a former country house that was used by field ambulances and brigade headquarters during the war. It was gradually destroyed by shelling and the grounds became covered by small cemeteries or enclosures. The largest of these, Enclosure No. 4, was used between June 1916 to February 1918, and later enlarged after the Armistice when over 3,000 graves were brought in from other burial grounds and the battlefields of the Ypres Salient. Casualties recovered from the surrounding area today, including these unknown soldiers, are laid to rest here alongside their comrades.

Welcome

'I am the resurrection and the life,' says the Lord. 'Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

John 11.25,26

Opening Prayer

My Brothers and Sisters, we meet in the name of Jesus Christ, who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father.

We remember before God our brothers who we lay to rest in this place, giving thanks for their lives, their service, and their sacrifice; we commend their souls to God our merciful redeemer and judge, and commit their mortal remains to the earth in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.

God of all consolation,
your Son Jesus Christ was moved to tears
at the grave of Lazarus his friend.

We pray for those who have mourned for these their loved ones:
look with compassion on your children;
give to troubled hearts the light of hope
and strengthen us all by the gift of faith,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiasticus 44.1-3,6-14

Read by a representative of the British Embassy

Let us now sing the praises of famous men,
our ancestors in their generations.
The Lord apportioned to them great glory,
his majesty from the beginning.
There were those who ruled in their kingdoms,
and made a name for themselves by their valour;
rich men endowed with resources,
living peacefully in their homes—
all these were honoured in their generations,
and were the pride of their times.
Some of them have left behind a name,
so that others declare their praise.
But of others there is no memory;
they have perished as though they had never existed;
they have become as though they had never been born,
they and their children after them.
But these also were godly men,
whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten;
their wealth will remain with their descendants,
and their inheritance with their children's children.
Their descendants stand by the covenants;
their children also, for their sake.
Their offspring will continue for ever,
and their glory will never be blotted out.
Their bodies are buried in peace,
but their name lives on generation after generation.

Reading : I do not know your name - by Kenny Martin

Read by Lieutenant Fintan Yeatman, 1st Bn, The Rifles

I do not know your name, but I know you died
I do not know from where you came, but I know you died

Your uniform, branch of service, it matters not to me
Whether Volunteer or Conscript, or how it came to be
That politicians' failures, or some power-mad ambition
Brought you too soon to your death, in the name of any nation

You saw, you felt, you knew full well, as friend and foe were taken
By bloody death, that your life too, was forfeit and forsaken
Yet on you went and fought and died, in your close and private hell
For Mate or Pal or Regiment and memories never to tell

It was for each other, through shot and shell, the madness you endured
Side by side, through wound and pain, and comradeship assured
No family ties, or bloodline link, could match that bond of friend
Who shared the horror and kept on going, at last until the end

We cannot know, we were not there, it's beyond our comprehension
To know the toll that battle brings, of resolute intention
To carry on, day by day, for all you loved and hoped for
To live in peace a happy life, away from bloody war

For far too many, no long life ahead, free of struggle and pain, and gun
And we must remember the price that was paid, by each and every one
Regardless of views, opinions aside, no matter how each of us sees it
They were there and I cannot forget, even though I did not live it

I do not know your name, but I know you died
I do not know from where you came, but I know you died.

Blessing of the Grave

O God, by whose mercy the faithful departed find rest, bless this grave, and send your holy angel to watch over it. As we bury here the bodies of our brothers known only unto you, deliver their souls from every bond of sin, that they may rejoice in you with your saints for ever. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Committal

Because God has chosen to call our brothers from this life to himself, we commit their bodies to their resting place, for we are dust and unto dust we shall return. But the Lord Jesus Christ will change our mortal bodies to be like his in glory, for he is risen, the firstborn from the dead. So let us commend our brothers to the Lord, that the Lord may embrace them in peace and raise up their bodies on the last day

All **Amen.**

The Exhortation

Read by a soldier from 1st Bn, The Rifles

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.
We will remember them.

The Last Post

*Played by Lance Corporal Curtis Jones
The Band and Bugles of The Rifles*

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

Read by a soldier from 1st Bn, The Rifles

When you go home tell them of us and say:
'For your tomorrow, we gave our today.'

Laying of Wreaths

Prayer

Almighty God, Stretch forth your mighty arm to strengthen and protect the armed forces: Grant that meeting danger with courage and all occasions with discipline and loyalty, they may truly serve the cause of justice and peace; To honour your holy name,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

All **Amen.**

Prayer

God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world and grant us the grace to pray for these we pray for today. And together we say the words our Lord and Saviour taught us:

The Lord's Prayer (all)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.

Amen.

The Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you his peace this day, and always.

And the blessing of God Almighty; the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you, and those whom you love, wherever they may be, this day and always.

All Amen.



The Ministry of Defence, through the Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre, is responsible for the research, identification and burial of all British casualties worldwide.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for the graves, memorials, records and memory of the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two world wars.

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